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The times and the teaching
of John Wesley



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THE TIMES AND THE TEACHING
OF JOHN WESLEY.



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✓
JOHN WESLEY

✓ BY
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*"John Wesley stands on high in holy fame,
And sacred memories cluster 'round his name."*

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BY ARTHUR W. LITTLE.

TO THE
RT. REV. FATHER IN GOD
EDWARD FAWCETT

BISHOP OF QUINCY

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED BY ONE WHO HAS
WATCHED HIS CONSCIENTIOUS AND
HONORABLE RETURN
FROM WESLEYANISM TO WESLEY

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PREFACE.

There are two John Wesleys—just as there are two Saint Peters—the Wesley of history and the Wesley of popular tradition. It is my purpose to supplement and thus to correct this imperfect popular impression by calling attention to certain suppressed or forgotten facts in the character, the faith, the work of that great and holy man.*

I shall first give a picture of the sad religious state of England under the Georges. Next, I shall sketch briefly the life of the Founder of Methodism—a life noble, consecrated, abounding in self-sacri-

* This has been done before. See, e.g., *Wesley in Company with High Churchmen*, by H. W. Holden; *The Churchman's Life of Wesley*, by R. Denny Urlln; *Wesley and Modern Methodism*, by Canon Hockin; *John Wesley*, by J. H. Overton; *The Church and Wesleyanism*, by P. G. Medd; *John Wesley's Churchmanship* and *Who Are Wesley's Heirs?* by Dean Luckcock; *John Wesley Being Dead, Yet Speaketh*, by Joseph Hammond; *A Methodist in Search of the Church*, by S. Y. M'Masters, etc., etc. The earlier Methodist biographers of Wesley, such as Whitehead, Coke, and Moore, and measurably Tyerman in our day, did not ignore the facts which it is the purpose of this little book to set forth.

fice and beneficent activity. This I shall do in order to make a background on which to show the *teaching* of Wesley, the basic principles of his belief, the object of his "Societies," and his living and dying injunctions to his followers.

I do not claim that Wesley was always consistent. As a priest of the Church he sometimes did things which had an unchurchly look and a non-conformist tendency, of which he seemed wholly unconscious. These things, however, concerned minor matters of discipline, jurisdiction, tenure of property, and methods of work in a dark and lawless age; or else they were mistakes of judgment under the bewildering pressure of unprecedented conditions and of evils which cried to heaven.

The great central sweep of his life-current was intelligently, sincerely, loyally Anglo-Catholic. This, I venture to think, will be found to be not only *asserted*, but *proved*, in this little book.

It is necessary to bear in mind that Wesley's aim was avowedly *to supplement*, not *to supplant*, the Church. In all his utterances Wesley assumes that his followers attend the parish church every Sunday and receive the ministrations of the parish priest. As the Church was at that time deficient in zeal, evangelistic spirit, Christian brotherhood, and subjective religion, Wesley gave his chief efforts to such things in order to remedy a temporary defect and to provoke the whole body of the clergy to do the same.

But these things, so conspicuous in Methodism,

should, as Wesley designed, rest on the bed-rock of sound Churchmanship. Alone and without the sacramental grace, the authority, the steady order and control of the Church, they do not constitute a rounded, well balanced, stable system. The best, the most successful period of Methodism was while it was an integral portion of the Church, the Methodist "Connection." Had it remained so, the cause of Christ would have been advanced beyond our fondest hopes.

That for which Wesley most longed and prayed and wrought, viz., the *awakening of the Church to the work of saving souls*, is now an accomplished fact. Wesley in the dark century dreamed of such a revival, and began it. The Oxford Movement has made it a reality. The dominant spirit of the Anglo-Catholic Communion to-day is *Wesleyan* in the truest sense of that word. The Church is now in practice, and not only in theory, a Church after Wesley's own heart, and that to a degree which no other religious body has attained.

That which Wesley most dreaded and deprecated and denounced is also an accomplished fact, viz., *the separation of the bulk of his followers from the Church he loved*, carrying with them a part, but *only* a part, of his faith and of his love.

As rector, for many years, of the parish which, I apprehend, contains the strongest stronghold of Methodism in the world, and is the seat of the Northwestern University, I have seen much of all that is best in the Methodist religion. I have many

dear friends in that communion. I have never spoken a harsh or uncharitable word of one of them (or of anyone who loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth). I differ from them only wherein they, as Methodists, differ from their Founder, and wherein I, as a Churchman, agree with him.

I offer this little book to Churchmen and to Methodists alike. I am not concerned that any others should see it. It is a "family letter." I wish that every Churchman and every Methodist would read it, and that, too, in the kindly spirit in which, God knows, it is meant.

To my brother Churchmen I offer it in memory of *one of our own greatest heroes*, "a prince and a mighty man in Israel." This I do with the hope of leading them to a higher appreciation of John Wesley and a better understanding of the status of our Methodist cousins—for near of kin we account them still.

To my Methodist cousins I offer this little book with the honest hope and the earnest prayer that it may lead them to a juster estimate of their Founder and a more faithful following of his teaching and of his example.

If some of them, as they read his forgotten words, should feel like Josiah, when Shaphan the scribe brought him the long lost Book of the Law (II. Chron. xxxiv. 18-21), it would not be strange. And if so be that, by the mercy of God, here and there one or another should be led to look toward the

old Mother Church and to come home, I, as an honest Churchman, would thank God. There is a light in the Church's window and a loving welcome within. "*Antiquam exquirite matrem.*" But even though this may not happen in a single case, I shall still thank God, if my honest effort will only give my Methodist friends a little more of kindly regard for the old Catholic and Apostolic Church which Wesley loved, and which is far more lovable now than it was in his day.

If, after manfully facing the same premises, we Churchmen and Methodists draw different conclusions, then let us regretfully go our several ways, though without agreement, yet not without love. I judge no man, but it was Wesley himself who said: "I do and must blame every one of them for separating. Afterwards I leave them to God."

I would only add that I wish *all* Methodists might have the kindly feeling toward the old Mother Church, which I find that many of them still cherish in their heart of hearts, and which "certain also of their own poets" have so well expressed, as for example in the following lines: -

The Church of England, venerable name,
How rich thy legacy of holy fame!
Scarce had the Lord ascended from the earth
When Apostolic zeal gave thee thy birth.
The trunk that bore John Wesley as its shoot
Had plainly not yet withered to the root.
Her children from this ancient mother sprung
Will not upbraid her with a heedless tongue.

From her we have our richest heritage,
Our history has with hers a common page.
Reformed, not revolutionized, thou hast
Ne'er broken with the great historic past;
Freed from the yoke, purged from the papal stain,
Thy ancient monuments and forms remain.
Thine are those mighty shrines of prayer and praise
Which bow the soul and then to heaven upraise.
Thy noble ritual is sure defense
'Gainst weak caprice or crude irreverence;
Thine is the glorious anthem and the choir
Of seraph voices that in song aspire;
Thine are the sacred liturgies more sweet
As generations the same prayers repeat,
More deeply hallowed as from sire to son
The holy immemorial words pass on,
With ever richer fragrance round them shed
By filial reverence for the sainted dead,
Binding the earlier and the later days
In one continual chain of prayer and praise.
Go on, great Church, still make thy faith to shine,
And with thy might help on the work divine:
Still, fervor with propriety unite,
And pour on truth thy learning's steady light;
Still onward press to nobler, holier deed,
In all of good be God thy help and speed.†

† "Methodism," pp. 15-16, 23-4-5.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH AND THE AGE.

THE eighteenth century is the polar night of Anglican history. From the unification and final establishment of the Church under St. Theodore, before England was a nation, until the present day, there has been no one century during which the outlook for Catholic truth and Christian living was so hopeless, as the hundred years which followed the death of Queen Anne. Our Church had sunk very low in the thirteenth century; but the two great orders of preaching friars—mendicant Methodists of that age—quickenened and purified her. They in turn fell from their first excellence and became a curse, as do all extraordinary agencies super-added to the regular and permanent system of

the Church, when they have accomplished their temporary mission.

The English Church, however, got rid of the degenerate followers of St. Francis and St. Dominic; in due time freed herself from the long usurpation of the Roman Pontiffs; survived the fever and delirium of the Reformation, and came out of it all the same old Catholic and Apostolic Church. Like a fair woman after a siege of typhoid, she found herself thin, pale, shorn of her golden locks, impoverished with doctors' bills, but the same "elect lady," only purer in blood and brighter in mind.

Next, we see the Church surviving the horrors of the Puritan rebellion. In the Restoration settlement of 1662, purified by fire, she reasserted her Catholicity and claimed her doctrinal, devotional, and organic continuity more strenuously than before. Charles II. continued, in the main, the ecclesiastical policy of his martyred father. Bad as he was, he nevertheless gathered about him a noble bench of Bishops, the "Caroline divines," of whom, with their presbyters, it used to be said, *clerus Anglicanus, stupor mundi!*—the Anglican clergy, the wonder of the world!

The accession, in 1688, of William of Orange, a Protestant and a foreigner, rendered necessary by the perversion and the tyranny of James II., was a dreadful blow to the Catholic cause in Great Britain. On political grounds William deprived of their sees and livings six of the best Bishops in England, with four hundred priests, and all the Bishops and priests of Scotland, establishing the Calvinistic heresy in the northern kingdom, and attempting (though in vain) to incorporate all forms of Protestant Christianity into the Catholic Church of England.

The sees were soon filled, for the most part, with latitudinarian Bishops, mere tools of the Dutch king. But, by the mercy of God, the priesthood stood firm. Neither William nor his complacent prelates could frighten or coax the Lower House of Convocation to surrender their Catholic birthright, or even to allow the word "Protestant" to be indirectly associated with the Anglican Church.

The eighteenth century came in with a gleam of light. Queen Anne was a true friend to the Church. Convocation was allowed to resume its sittings. Great efforts were made to

conserve the Faith, elevate morals, and encourage learning; to repair and build churches, to relieve the grinding poverty of the lower clergy, and even to propagate religion in distant lands.

When the Queen died, in 1714, the Church of England was stronger in the affection of the masses than ever before for a thousand years. It was, however, the glory of sunset. The night—that polar night—was at hand.

Many who know only the awakened Church of to-day, will hardly credit me if I draw a picture of the Church under the Georges. A majority of the Bishops were Whig politicians promoted for political services. Most of them were gentlemen of scholarly tastes and respectable morals, living comfortably in their palaces or in London, courtiers, Erastians, Low Churchmen. Some of them never visited their Dioceses. Confirmation was sadly neglected; discipline, there was little; energy and enthusiasm, none at all.

The voice of the Church was hushed. Convocation was not allowed to sit from 1717 until 1851. The parish clergy became lazy and poor, and largely forfeited the respect which the sacred office should always command. The par-

ish priest was, indeed, "betwixt the devil and the deep sea." If, in his preaching and his work, he showed zeal and enthusiasm, he was suspected of being a Puritan. If he showed reverence and decency in worship, he was accused of being a "Papist and a Jacobite."

Those were the days of the so-called "fox-hunting parson." The well-to-do incumbents lived like squires or farmers, doing but little priestly work. The poor curates can hardly be said to have lived at all—they starved along.

The civil government was carried on by bribery and corruption. The morals of the nobility and upper classes were frightfully depraved. The lower orders were sunk in pauperism, drunkenness, and brutality.

Heresy reared its hydra-heads. Infidelity stalked hideous through the realm. Unitarianism, Deism, Atheism, came in like a flood. Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Tindal, Morgan, Chubb, Bolingbroke, Hume, these were chief exponents of the anti-Christian philosophy. It was a down-grade unbelief. "No dogmatic Christianity; no historic Christianity; no Christianity at all."

The Church, however, was not dead, but

sleeping. Her corporate voice was silenced; but individual champions arose, like Achilles when he girded on the armor his mother brought him, and all intellectual assaults against revealed religion were fairly met and grandly overcome. Sherlock, Conybeare, Berkeley, Warburton, were, in their special controversies, not unworthy successors of the Caroline divines. Horsley and the great Waterland expelled the demon of Unitarianism which was creeping in the back door of the Church. Bishop Butler's "Analogy," on which he spent the labor of twenty years, laid Deism in the dust. It was the greatest controversial book ever written. It will never die.

While the Church's great leaders were individually defending the outposts of revealed religion, the citadel was sadly neglected. Church principles were ignored. Intellectual contests were of small interest to the masses who were perishing for the simple preaching of the Gospel, the grace of the Sacraments, and the privilege and inspiration of Catholic worship. Burke has testified that not more than one out of a hundred of the population could read. To such people, of what use were political

harangues, dull homilies on morality, and philosophical disquisitions on the "reasonableness" of Christianity? Blackstone once said that whenever he heard a noted preacher in London, he could never discern whether he were a follower of Confucius, Mohammed, or Christ.

In such an age as this it is not to be wondered that the Church, though she kept her ancient liturgy and law, word for word, yet lost many of the proprieties of worship, her old Catholic customs and traditions, the ritual and the decorum of the House of God. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated in most parish churches but once a month or once a quarter, and in some only once a year. It lost its place as the Church's great corporate act of worship and of sacrifice. Many people would no longer stay to the end of the Communion Service. In spite of the canon law which requires all to tarry for the blessing, they would make an ostentatious withdrawal in the midst of the service, a retrocession which the late Bishop Coxe used to call, "The Dead March of the Soul," and which has not yet ceased.¹

¹ It is safe to say that even now many of the baptized members of the Church of England have never even wit-

The law of the Church of England reënacted in the Prayer Book of 1662—and still unchanged—required that the ancient eucharistic vestments, lights, incense, crosses, and other accessories of worship and symbols of truth, should “be retained and be in use.”² But in a majority of the churches not merely most of these things, but the very memory of them, had passed away. The great Bishop Butler was accused of Romanism because he had cross and candles on the altar of his private chapel. Kneeling in prayer, orientating in the Creed³ and *Gloria Patri*, reverencing the altar on entering and leaving the church,⁴ even bowing at the mention of the holy name of Jesus,⁵ all these universal and beneficent customs, the natural

nessed a single celebration of the Holy Eucharist, nor heard the “Comfortable Words,” nor joined in the Sacrifice, nor sung the *Gloria in Excelsis*, although two post-Reformation canons forbid any one to withdraw. See a valuable tract by the Rev. John Goings, entitled “Attendance at Holy Communion the Way to Communion.”

² See Wlrgman's *The English Reformation and the Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 45-49.

³ See *Churchman's Life of Wesley*, p. 67.

⁴ Canon vii. of 1603-4.

⁵ Canon xviii. 1603-4. See Mine's *Presbyterian Clergyman Looking for the Church*, pp. 236-237; also *Reasons for Being a Churchman* (Ed. of 1905), pp. 264-5 and note.

expression of faith, of piety, and of love, fell largely into disuse.

The writer is not now pleading for the restoration of these things. Most of them have already been restored; and the rest of them will blossom again, as soon as the remaining weeds of Puritanism and of worldliness shall have been eradicated from the Anglican heart. But whatever be our individual opinions as to the utility and the desirability of some of these things, we must at least remember that they all were, and are, a part of the ecclesiastical heritage of the Church of England; that they have never been legally abolished, but only dropped—so far as they have been dropped—and that not in an age of faith and piety, but in the darkest days of our religious history, in an age of coldness, of indifference, and of shockingly bad taste, in an age of abounding heresy and immorality, when the love of many had waxed cold.

Of Catholic ritual, properly so-called, but little remained, and that chiefly in the Cathedrals and the collegiate churches. For example, the ancient ceremonial use of incense—which had never been abolished by law—lin-

gered in some of the Cathedrals until well into the dark century, when it was dropped at Ely, the last Cathedral which had retained it, because, forsooth, a certain Cathedral dignitary, who had the Italian habit of taking snuff during divine service, discovered that the combination of incense and tobacco was distasteful, and so gave up, not the snuff, but the incense!

One cause of the darkness of this dark age was the fact that, in the face of the increase and change of centers of population, almost no new church accommodation was provided. Indeed, the introduction of the ghastly eighteenth century pews—like sheep pens or loose boxes—wasted about twenty-five per cent. of the seating capacity of the churches. Along with this came the unchurchly custom—against which the Wesleys used to protest—of renting pews, so that in many cases the poor were practically excluded from their Father's house.

As to music, of course vested choirs and choral services were retained in Cathedrals and in some other churches. But in general the music of the Church was artistically and ecclesiastically hideous. The Psalter, which was written to be sung, and which used to be so

gloriously chanted, was commonly read.* The service was for the most part a dull dialogue between the parson and the clerk. The people sat through it in spite of the rubrics, exchanged looks and nods, or whispered and dozed. And in place of the office hymns—what shall I say?—they used Rouse's or some similar version of the Psalms!†

The Christian Year was not lived up to. The daily offices were largely in abeyance. The Friday abstinence was laughed at. The Saints' Days were not generally observed. Even the awful and precious solemnities of Holy Week were often forgotten. Archbishop Cornwallis was greeted with cries of "No popery," because he and Bishop Porteus of London had advocated a better observance of Good Friday, which had become almost obsolete.

* Even yet our congregations are strangely slow in demanding of their clergy the right to sing the songs of "the Sweet Slinger of Israel."

† "Sternhold and Hopkins," "Tate and Brady," and other doggerel translations of the stately parallelisms of David were also used. The version by the Cromwellian Rouse possessed some merit for his day, but we cannot fall to relish the satire of Dean Swift's parodical apostrophe:

"King David never would acquit

A criminal like thee,

Against his Psalms who could commit

Such wicked poetry."

It may be asked what was the condition of the dissenting bodies in England all this time. I answer that, bad as the Church was, they were infinitely worse, as the Wesleys testify again and again. Dissenters were few, anyway. Churchmen had dropped so nearly to their level of worship and of faith, that, as a sagacious writer has observed, "there was not much to dissent from." The few English Roman Catholics were the most respectable of the Separatists, but they were bitterly persecuted and kept down. The English (but not the Scottish) Presbyterians,^s with hardly any exceptions, abjured Christianity and became Socinians; and even the Independents and the Anabaptists had less spiritual life and activity than the state-ridden and semi-protestantized "Establishment."⁹

From such a picture of eighteenth century religion, we turn away with horror and with shame.

A polar night, however, has its moon and stars and *aurora borealis*; nor is its darkness

^s See Milne's *Presbyterian Clergyman*, etc., p. 148 (Ed. of 1871).

⁹ See in this connection Wesley's 55th Sermon, § 12.

perpetual, for springtide, in slowly ascending circles, will bring back the sun. The picture I have drawn is in general outline; close examination will show light and hope.

The Church, even then, bound and gagged and prostrate beneath the heel of the State, was still "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Her ministry was lawful; her sacraments (though often slovenly administered) were valid; her Prayer Book and canon law, intact. In theory she was all she had been in the days of Bede or Anselm, Wolsey or Bancroft, Laud or Sancroft, all that she is to-day. In many a household, as in the land of Goshen, there was light. At the universities, patristic learning, while not in vogue, was by no means extinct, and among the non-jurors was predominant. In some parishes the priest was a model of all a parish priest should be. Goldsmith's country parson, in "The Deserted Village," was no isolated example.¹⁰ For some

¹⁰ "At church with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray.
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile."
Etc., etc.

years a number of religious guilds or sodalities, founded soon after the Restoration, kept alive, in a quiet way, Catholic Faith, Catholic devotion, and holy living.¹¹ There were still tender and burdened souls who availed themselves of spiritual direction and "the benefit of Absolution," and not a few who communicated reverently before partaking of common food. In some parishes early Communion, the proper observance of all Feasts and Fasts, and daily services were maintained; and in many, almsgiving and works of mercy for the bodies and

¹¹ "The corruption of manners which had been general since the Restoration, was combatted by societies for the Reformation of Manners, which in the last years of the seventeenth century acquired extraordinary dimensions. They began in certain private societies, which arose in the reign of James II. (A.D. 1685-9), chiefly under the auspices of Beveridge and Bishop Horneck. These societies were at first purely devotional, and they appear to have been almost identical in character with those of the early Methodists.

"They held prayer meetings, weekly communions, and Bible readings; they sustained charities, and distributed religious books, and they cultivated a warmer, and more ascetic type of devotion than was common in the Church. Societies of this description sprung up in almost every considerable city in England, and even in some of those in Ireland."—Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, II., 594-5.

Many of these societies were still in existence in 1738, and "received Wesley with open arms." They seem to have formed a nucleus for his "United Societies." (See *Churchman's Life of Wesley*, Ap. III.)

the souls of men. The Church was still the Church, and as such, capable of recovery and rejuvenation.

Even in the Erastian episcopate there were some bright and shining lights—learned, pious, Catholic-minded men: Wake, Potter, Gibson, Waterland, Butler, Conybeare, Berkeley, Lowth, and sainted Wilson, Apostle of the Isle of Man. But *the average* of religion and Churchmanship in the century—"the withered, unbelieving, second-hand eighteenth century," as Carlyle calls it—was as I have described it.

CHAPTER II.

THE STUDENT AND THE MISSIONARY.

IT was in such general darkness, coldness, sloth, Protestant Erastianism, degradation, and neglect that John Wesley arose, an Anglo-Catholic zealot, a root out of a dry ground.

His life practically coincided with the century, 1703 to 1791. He came of gentle blood on both sides. He called himself "a High Churchman and the son of a High Churchman." His father was a learned and pious priest, of the "high and dry" Ecclesiastical-Tory type; his mother, a true gentlwoman and a saint of the Church Militant. He appears to have been confirmed, and certainly made his first Communion when eight years old. Educated at the Charterhouse School in London, he won a

scholarship at Christ Church, Oxford, being already, at seventeen years of age, a fine Greek, Latin, and Hebrew scholar.

At Oxford he read hard, and lived a chaste and frugal life. He took deacon's orders at the hands of Bishop Potter in 1725. The following year he received a fellowship in "the College of the Blessed Virgin Mary and All Saints," commonly called Lincoln College—an institution exclusively of divines, founded "to overturn all heresies and defend the Catholic Faith."

Here he was at once made "Greek Lecturer" and "Moderator of the Classes." He never knew what it was to have a vacation. His reading was prodigious. Mondays and Tuesdays he devoted to Greek and Latin; Wednesdays, to logic and ethics; Thursdays, to Hebrew and Arabic; Fridays, to metaphysics and natural philosophy; Saturdays, to oratory and poetry; Sundays, to divinity. He always rose at four o'clock, and worked about eighteen hours a day for the rest of his life.

His university career was interrupted for two years, which he spent as curate to his father in two rural parishes. He was ordered priest

in 1728, and returning to Oxford resumed his old work, from 1729 to 1735, making thirteen years of Oxford residence and unremitting study.

At the time of his eventful return to the university he was a learned High Churchman, with unusual love and appreciation of the early Church, but still rather of the "high and dry" Anglican type. He now outgrew the "dry," and became an unqualified High Churchman; what we call (and correctly, for it is a right use of the word) a *Catholic*;¹² or, as one has said, "a Puseyite, a hundred years before Dr. Pusey."

The writings of Mr. William Law, a non-juring Catholic-minded clergyman, awakened in John Wesley and in his younger brother, Charles, a passion for holiness—for the religious life—which lifts them to the plane of saintship. He now becomes the head of a little coterie of young men, like-minded, whom his brother Charles had gathered about him and organized into a club. They read to-

¹² Throughout this book I use the word *Church* as Wesley used it. For the meaning of *Catholic*, see Mason's *Faith of the Gospel*, chap. viii.; also *Reasons for Being a Churchman*, p. 195 (Ed. of 1905).

gether (chiefly the Greek Testament) every night. They are staunch Churchmen. They fast every Friday, as the Prayer Book enjoins, and even every Wednesday, as did many of the early Christians. They observe Lent. They communicate every Sunday and holy day, though crowds of their fellow students jeer at them, as they make their way to the altar of St. Mary's, or Christ Church, the only two altars in Oxford at which there was at that time a weekly Eucharist. They are nick-named "Methodists," on account of their strict observance of the methods of the Church as prescribed in the statutes of the college. They visit the schools, the sick, the poor, the prisoners. They keep themselves unspotted from the world. They devote to charity their entire incomes above the barest living expenses—and our zealot continues to do so all of his life, giving to charity a quarter of a million of dollars of his hard earnings, and dying poor. They are rigorously orthodox. They are practically identical with the leaders of the greater Oxford Movement of seventy years ago.

Of our zealot, in particular, it may be incontrovertibly affirmed that his Christianity

was scriptural, dogmatic, historical, sacerdotal, sacramental, missionary, and practical, and that he never changed it to the day of his death."

He hears now a Macedonian cry from the motley colonists and savage red men of far off Georgia. To leave Oxford for any spot on earth must always be a sacrifice. To leave Oxford for the wilderness of America in 1735, to labor among savage pagans and—must I say it?—savage Christians, was nothing less than self-immolation. But he is eager for it; while his Christian-Spartan mother exclaims: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more!"

After a perilous voyage, our zealot begins his work as the active parish priest of Savannah. Beside two daily services, immense pastoral duty, and teaching both by day and by night, his ordinary Sunday work was as follows (and at all or most of the services there appear to have been sermons or instructions):

¹³ He was seventy-two years old when he wrote to Lord Stanhope, "I am a High Churchman and the son of a High Churchman." In 1789 he declared: "I hold all the doctrines of the Church of England. I love her liturgy. I approve her plan of discipline. I have been true to my profession from 1730 to this day."—Sermon on Heb. v. 4, *Works*, Vol. VII., pp. 277-280.

From 5 to 6:30, Matins and Litany; at 9, service in Italian; from 10:30 to 12:30, the Holy Eucharist as the Church's chief office of sacrifice and praise; at 2, catechising of children; at 3 Evensong; and in the evening, a lecture or Bible class. On Saturdays also he conducted services in French and in German in neighboring settlements. He even learns Spanish, so as to do something for the poor Spanish Jews of the colony. He seems, like Bishop Patteson, to have the Pentecostal gift of tongues.

Every detail of this work, worship, teaching, and discipline—including the hearing of confessions—he carried out on the strict lines of the Prayer Book. But like many a priest, both in England and in America since his day, he found "old Adam too strong for young Melancthon." This conglomerate of eighteenth century Anglicans, with German, French, and Italian Protestants, did not appreciate, and did not wish, the Catholic religion of the Book of Common Prayer. And so they made the place impossible for him. It is true, he did not use the gentleness and the tact, in dealing with weak and erring souls, which every zealot for

Christ has to learn by bitter experience. Certainly the Anglo-Catholics of to-day have learned it; and now have the ear of all people because they have won their hearts and commanded their respect.

Our fiery young devotee made enemies, did some rash things, and became involved in a law-suit. He was disappointed, too, in his work among the Indians. At this time also he had the bitter trial of a disappointment in a pure and honest love. And so with a sad heart he returned to England, for awhile—and naturally—a crushed and melancholy man.

Wesley himself underestimated the permanent value of his work in Georgia. It was, however, far from being a failure. His successor, Mr. Whitefield, declared: "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake."

In this trying period, Wesley had the misfortune to fall under the influence of those morbid, ascetic, but lovable pietists, the Moravians. It is cruel injustice to such a man to

place much stress on hasty and frantic words uttered at such a time. He wrote in his journal: "I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh! who shall convert me?" But he himself, when years after, his eye fell on the sentence quoted above, wrote on the margin: "I am not so sure of this." He had also written: "I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell." But in his old age he added a note, "I believe not." That entry in the journal, says he, "was wrote in the anguish of my heart, to which I gave vent between God and my own soul." Let us cover it with the mantle of love and pity. If this man were not a true Christian in Oxford and in Georgia, "God help the 'true Christians' of to-day!" In the calm retrospect of his sixty-ninth year he writes: "*Vitæ me redde priori*"—Give me back to my former life—"Let me be again an Oxford Methodist. I did then walk closely with God, and redeem the time."

The same will apply to all this good man's talk about his never having been a Christian, when for awhile the Moravians had instilled into his broken heart the heresy that no one could be a Christian until he had experienced

instantaneous conversion, and felt a "full assurance" of salvation. He thought he received this soon after; and for a time, while under the illusion, he and his brother, Charles, preached the necessity of it to the people. But in his mature age he left on record: "I marvel that they did not stone us!" and he expresses the hope that his followers "know better now."¹⁴

Some smoke from this Moravian furnace dimmed for a time his spiritual vision; and left henceforth, as it were, the smell of fire about his garments. But it did not destroy his allegiance to the Church.

And here it must be remarked that Wesley honestly thought—as indeed many other good Churchmen have thought until quite recently—that the Moravian sect, possessing as it does much of truth and piety and grace, was really a portion of the Catholic Church with the Apostolic episcopate and valid sacraments. Otherwise, he would have had nothing whatever to do with it. A visit to their headquarters in Germany and a long interview with their chief, Count Zinzendorf—that mixture of piety, fa-

¹⁴ Letter to Melville, Southey's *Life of Wesley*, I., 251 (Ed. of 1846).

naticism, and pride—soon opened his eyes. Though retaining kindly feelings toward the Moravians, he broke from their snares. The clouds rolled away. Nor was the Father's face ever again hidden from him. He lived in grace and in peace, in conscious communion with God, and in love and burning zeal for souls.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE WORK.

WESLEY now entered on a career of work such as no other mortal man ever accomplished, a career which can be appreciated only by understanding the sloth, the formalism, the Protestant Erastianism, amid which he blazed forth like a comet athwart the midnight sky. From 1739, when he was thirty-six years of age, until 1791, in his eighty-eighth year, he travelled, mostly on horseback, by bad roads and no roads, two hundred and twenty-five thousand miles, an average of four thousand and five hundred miles a year, preaching (in addition to conference addresses) more than forty thousand sermons, an average, say, of one thousand a year, an average of three or four every day, the

first always at five o'clock in the morning; preaching in churches and houses, but chiefly in the open air, sometimes to audiences of twenty thousand at once. Nor was this all. His powers of organization and of leadership were like a Loyola's or a Napoleon's. He founded hundreds of societies, and governed them with more than Napoleonic vigor and mastery of detail. He established and managed schools and hospitals. He wrote infinite letters. He maintained his old studies. He kept abreast of the literature, the science, the politics, the controversies, the philanthropies of the age. He edited papers and magazines. He wrote and compiled more than two hundred volumes.

He conceived and created within the Church a vast body of lay preachers, or "lay helpers," as he commonly called them, something like our lay readers, but more like our preaching friars of the thirteenth century. His work was chiefly among the poor, the outcast, the neglected—as he says, "the lost sheep of the Church of England." Though a gentleman, born and bred, and at home in the most intellectual society of the age, with such men as Dr. Johnson and Bishop Lowth, his heart was with

the lowly. The worldliness, the sensuality, the materialism of the rich he could not abide. "Cultivated pagans," says he, "commonly called Christians"! His preaching was such as England had never heard before. Crowds hung breathless on his simple, practical, earnest, and awful words. Throughout the length and breadth of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the adjacent isles, he raised the fallen, enlightened the ignorant, strengthened the faithful, roused the indifferent, and brought back thousands and tens of thousands to the Mother Church. Truly it may be said of him: "He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abominations of iniquity."¹⁵ In some parishes a majority of the worshippers were men and women whom Wesley had reclaimed from unbelief and viciousness of life.

His followers he gathered into classes and conferences, a vast guild or brotherhood *within the Church*—something like our great Brotherhood of St. Andrew. They met together for prayer, Bible study, exhortation, and the singing of hymns, to *supplement* the work of the Church,

¹⁵ *Ecclus.* xlii. 2.

but only at such hours as would not clash with the hours of the regular Church services. Wesley compiled the first vernacular hymn book of the English Church. He believed that music is the handmaid of Religion. He loved the music of the Communion service. After his visit to Exeter in 1782, he wrote in his journal: "I was much pleased with the decent behavior of the whole congregation at the Cathedral, and also with the solemn music at the Post-Communion—one of the finest compositions I ever heard."

Schism or separation from the Church he regarded not only as unnecessary and inexpedient, but as a folly and a sin. Dissenters he allowed to attend his ministrations, with a view to reclaiming them; but every feature of dissent he conscientiously detested and abhorred, making it a habit of his life—from which he rarely ever departed—not to set foot inside their conventicles. Even dissenting Baptism, "lay Baptism," as he called it, he (mistakenly, I think, but emphatically) refused to allow.

That such zeal in the midst of sloth, such Catholicity in the midst of a fossilized Protestantism, such trumpet blasts in the catacombs

of the dead, should stir up the dry bones and rouse opposition, is not strange. The wonder is that the hostility was not greater. It must be remembered, too, that our zealot began this great work under the suspicion of Moravian heresy which merited anathema. Then the excesses and bad taste of many of his followers—though Wesley himself was never guilty of sensationalism, bad taste, or any vulgarity—caused natural suspicion. The novelty of his methods, such as the employment of lay helpers, and preaching in the open air, with his disregard of parish bounds (for which, however, he claimed a technical justification),¹⁶ led many to fear that the movement was really sectarian; while, on the other hand, his bold proclamation of the Catholic doctrine and practice of the Prayer Book, produced a widespread suspicion of Romanism, so that this loyal Anglo-Catholic

¹⁶ His alleged canonical excuse was as follows: "Being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received, I am a priest of the Church Universal; and being ordained as fellow of a college, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the Word of God in any part of the Church of England. I conceive not, therefore, that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law."—*Wesley's conversation with Bishop Butler*.

was constantly greeted with the silly cry of "No popery!"

At the start, therefore, most of the parish clergy, very naturally, refused to invite this zealot and his brother Charles to preach in the parish churches. Yet, be it well understood, *no formal ecclesiastical censure was ever visited upon them*. Most of the Bishops treated them with courtesy and consideration, some with friendship and confidence. The worst opposition the Wesleys encountered was, first, from low mobs; and, second, from Calvinists. As their loyalty to the Church became apparent, they were in demand as preachers in the parish churches all over the land. And they themselves would have died rather than leave the Church. Certain it is that, in spite of their giving offense and some reasonable grounds of suspicion, they were treated an hundred times better than Keble, Pusey, Neale, Littledale, Lowder, Mackonochie, Tooth, Enraght, Bell-Coxe, Dolling, the Bishop of Brechin, the Bishop of Lincoln, and many another true Wesleyan of our day.

CHAPTER IV.

DOCTRINAL POSITION.

I PROPOSE now to show the *status* of this Anglican zealot on certain fundamental principles of the Church, and his loyalty to the Church.

As to the three Creeds and the Articles, as to the Bible and Prayer Book, with all that they contain, he believed them all, he stood for them all, he fought for them all. He was even far above the average Anglican priest of to-day in what—for want of a better word—we may call Churchmanship.

He always believed and taught the Catholic doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. He never denied it; he never doubted it; though unfortunately he used the word regeneration in a

secondary and figurative sense also, as equivalent to conversion. This was a mistake, a far-reaching blunder. But the blunder on his part was philological rather than theological.

In his "Treatise on Baptism," published in 1756, and republished by himself *verbatim*, in 1773, he says:

"By Baptism, we who were by nature children of wrath, are hereby made the children of God. And this regeneration which our Church in so many places ascribes to Baptism is more than barely being admitted into the Church, although commonly connected therewith. Being grafted into the Body of Christ, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace. This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' By water, then—as a means—we are regenerated, or born again. . . . In the ordinary way there is no other means (than Baptism) of entering into the Church or into heaven."

As to the Sacrament of Confirmation, Wesley believed that through the laying on of the Bishop's hands, with prayer, the Holy Ghost is given to the baptized. He was urged by Fletcher of Madeley, under certain contingencies to administer Confirmation himself. But this he refused to do. He emphasized the practice of Confirmation in the early Church. He says: "Immediately after Baptism, they were

presented to the Bishop to be confirmed by prayer and the imposition of hands.”¹⁷

¹⁷ See Wesley's own ed. of his works (1791), IX. 16. For the following note I am indebted to *The Church Times*:

“There is never a word of John Wesley's to imply that ‘he did not believe in Confirmation, nor allow his followers to be confirmed,’ or ‘take any steps to prevent his followers from receiving Confirmation in their parish church.’ On the contrary, it is certain that at the period when Wesley received Valton and Hanby into the number of his preachers, he was himself strongly convinced that the baptized received the gift of the Holy Ghost ‘when, after Baptism, they were presented to the Bishop to be confirmed, by prayer and Imposition of Hands.’ Indeed, Wesley went further than this. One of his arguments in confutation of a ‘current opinion that Christians are not now to receive the Holy Ghost,’ and that it is mere ‘enthusiasm’ for those who are already Christians to expect such a gift, is drawn from the Church's ‘Order of Confirmation, or Laying on of Hands upon those that are Baptized.’ John Wesley argued: ‘From these passages it may sufficiently appear for what purposes *every Christian*, according to the doctrine of the Church of England, does *now receive the Holy Ghost* . . . It is to give them, what none can deny to be essential to *all Christians*, in *all ages*, those holy fruits of the Spirit which whoever hath not is none of His.’ The Holy Spirit is ‘the Promise of the Father,’ not simply to *convert* infidels or heathens into Christians, but to Christians themselves, to *confirm*, strengthen, edify, and sanctify them in that Christianity which they already have. Mr. Holden, in his *John Wesley in Company with High Churchmen*, most aptly cites Wesley's deliberate and somewhat defiant language in his ‘Hymn of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father’:

“The *Grace*, but not the *Spirit* of grace,
Their learned fools vouchsafe to allow:
He might be given in Ancient days,
But *God*, they teach, is needless now.

“‘But *God*, we know, *is given* in deed,
And still doth in His People dwell.’

“John Wesley was here contending, as Mr. Holden says,

Again, in Wesley's "Notes on the New Testament"—one of the legal standards of Wesleyan doctrine—we have the following words, which are conclusive as to their author having held the Catholic doctrine on Confirmation:

Hebrews vi. 1, "And when they believed, they were to be baptized in the baptism of Christ. The next thing was to lay hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Ghost."

As to the Holy Eucharist (which is after all the real test of Churchmanship), Wesley believed it to be a sacrifice offered to God as a perpetual memorial of the one great Sacrifice on Calvary; that only a priest, episcopally or—

'against the argument entertained even by (some) Bishops—the ministers of this Apostolic Ordinance—that *not the Holy Ghost*, but a *grace* of the Blessed Spirit, was what was given.' In the whole of this argument Wesley kept close to what he had learned from the best and holiest of all his human teachers, William Law, the real father of all that was wholesome and permanent, as of all that was Catholic in the Methodist movement. Wesley was undoubtedly an opportunist; and was often led to inconsistent action, as his friend Walker of Truro said, by confusing 'expediency' with 'principle.' But had he been the man imaginatively pictured by Dr. Rigg, he would have administered Confirmation himself as a presbyter, after the pattern of the 'Reformed Churches,' which he certainly did not, nor empower even his 'superintendent,' Coke, to do in America, so far as we are aware."

dained, can consecrate the Blessed Sacrament; that for others to do so would be "a sin"; that the Lord's Table is properly (as the English canons affirm) an altar.¹⁸ He believed in the Real Presence and in Eucharistic adoration. He maintained Sunday and all holy day Communion, and daily Eucharists during the octaves of the high festivals. He was far in advance of his age in insisting on the "mixed chalice" and the use of the credence or prothesis. He and his brother believed the *daily* celebration of the Holy Eucharist to be the Church's ideal, as the following stanza of one of their hymns shows:

"O would'st Thou to Thy Church return,
For which the faithful remnant sighs,
For which the drooping nations mourn;
Restore the *daily Sacrifice*."

The following extracts from his Eucharistic devotions and instructions speak for themselves:

"I come to Thee with hope and reverence, and believe that Thou art present in this Sacrament.

"I enjoy Thee in this Sacrament truly present, though hidden under another representation."¹⁹

¹⁸ Canon VII., 1603-4.

¹⁹ Wesley's "Companion for the Altar."

"We freely own that Christ is to be adored in the Lord's Supper; but that the elements are to be adored we deny."²⁰

That both John and Charles Wesley held the highest sacramental doctrine is evident from their hymns, which they continued to publish as long as they lived, and for the teaching of which each held himself to be individually responsible. It would be difficult to state the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist more clearly than it is stated in these hymns. Notice, for instance, the following extracts:

"Now on the sacred table laid,
Thy Flesh becomes our Food,
Thy Life is to our souls conveyed
In Sacramental Blood.

"Yet may we celebrate below,
And daily thus Thy offering show,
Exposed before Thy Father's eyes;
In this tremendous Mystery
Present Thee bleeding on the tree,
Our everlasting Sacrifice.

"Thou dost even now Thy banquet crown,
To every faithful soul appear,
And show Thy Real Presence here."

A thoughtful and accurate writer has observed:

"As to any supposed change in Wesley's principles respecting the sacraments, over and over again did he declare that he had never varied at all from the doctrine

²⁰ Note that these words, written in 1749, were reaffirmed and reprinted by Wesley himself in 1773, v., 788.

of the Church of England. Three years before his death he published a sermon on 'The Duty of Constant Communion,' 'written above five-and-fifty years before for the use of his pupils in Oxford,' in which the Holy Eucharist is termed a 'sacrifice,' and the Lord's Table an 'altar'; 'thanking God that he had not yet seen cause to alter his sentiments in any point which is there delivered,' and that 'in the course of fifty years he and his brother were not conscious of varying from the Church in any point of doctrine.'"

With respect to the grace and authority of Holy Orders, Wesley wrote in 1745:

"We believe it would not be right for us to administer either Baptism or the Lord's Supper, unless we had a commission so to do from those Bishops whom we apprehend to be in a *succession* [the italics are Wesley's] from the Apostles. . . . We believe there is and always was in every Christian Church (whether dependent on the Bishop of Rome or not) an outward priesthood, ordained by Jesus Christ, and an outward sacrifice offered there by men, authorized to act as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. We believe that the threefold order of ministers is not only authorized by its apostolical institution, but also by the written Word."

In 1748 he wrote:

"I believe that Bishops are empowered to do this [*i.e.*, to convey the ministerial authority] and have been so from the apostolic age."

He thoroughly approved the constitution of the Church. His belief in the priesthood or "sacerdotal office," as he called it, was clear and sound. He thoroughly believed in the episcopate. He spoke reverently of his own diocesan as "the High Priest of God," and of

an ancient Bishop as *Summus Sacerdos*. Yet here it must be noted that on this point John Wesley was not always consistent. At times the confusion of titles²¹ in the Apostolic Church confused him. And at times he entertained puerile doubts as to whether "*in case of necessity*," the Apostolic Succession might not be handed down through presbyters, on which supposition he made the one fatal blunder of his life.²²

He believed also in auricular confession as a help to sin-burdened souls.²³

²¹ The writer begs to refer to his *Reasons for Being a Churchman*, chapter IX., "Primitive Episcopacy and its Official Titles."

²² Wesley was not always consistent on the subject of Apostolic Succession. Again and again he asserted it, and yet more than once he spoke of "the *uninterrupted succession*" as "a fable." He probably referred not to the fact of the transmission of Holy Orders, but to the authenticity of the extant lists of Bishops back to the Apostolic age. (See *Churchman's Life of Wesley*, p. 72, and Hammond's *John Wesley*, p. 88 et seq.) He regarded Courayer's *Defence of Anglican Orders* as unanswerable. When he sometimes spoke of himself as a "Scriptural Bishop," he said: "I spoke on Lord King's *supposition*, that Bishops and Priests are essentially one order." Lord King's book, however, was written when the author was only twenty-two years of age, and a Presbyterian. It was easily refuted by a Churchman, whereupon Lord King repudiated it and withdrew it, and conformed to the Church. (See *Churchman's Life of Wesley*, Appendix viii.)

²³ *Wesley's Works* (Ed. 1829), V. 792.

He loved every detail of Church worship, and approved of every sacrament, ordinance, rite, and ceremony of the Church. The Christian Year was his delight. He loved its round of festival and fast. He used to teach that a man can no more go to heaven without fasting than without praying. Very precious to him was the dear feast of All Saints. The communion of saints was to him a reality. He believed in prayers for the faithful departed, and devoutly taught and used them.²⁴ He al-

²⁴ The following are extracts from his *Manual of Daily Prayer*, first published in 1735, and deliberately republished by its author, with the *ne varietur* of the Preface, in 1771-3:

Sunday morning.—“Grant that they and those that are already dead in the Lord may at length enjoy Thee.”

Monday morning.—“O grant that we, with those that are already dead in Thy faith and fear, may together partake of a joyful resurrection.”

Monday evening.—“Bring them and us, with those that already rest from their labours, into the joy of our Lord.”

Tuesday morning.—“Grant that we all, together with those that now sleep in Thee, may awake to life everlasting.”

Tuesday evening, also Wednesday morning, Thursday evening, and Saturday morning.—“Grant that we and all the members of Thy Holy Church may find mercy in the dreadful day of judgment.”

Thursday morning.—“That we, together with all those who are gone before us in Thy faith and fear, may find a merciful acceptance at the last day.”

Friday morning.—“Bring us, with all those that have pleased Thee from the beginning of the world, into the glories of Thy Son's Kingdom.”

Friday evening.—“By Thy infinite mercies vouchsafe to

ways spoke of his loved ones who had died in the Lord as being in Paradise.

Next to the oracles of God, he bowed his will to the authority of Holy Church. As he believed, so he taught, through evil report and through good report, declaring in his old age, two years before his death, "*I have uniformly gone on for fifty years, never varying from the doctrine of the Church at all.*"

bring us, with those that are dead in Thee, to rejoice together before Thee."

Saturday evening.—"O Lord, Thou God of spirits and of all flesh, be mindful of Thy faithful from Abel the just even unto this day; and for Thy Son's sake give to them and us in Thy due time a happy resurrection and a glorious rest at Thy right hand for evermore."

It is thus evident that John Wesley, at the mature age of 68, when carefully revising his writings, desired that those who used his manual of daily prayer should make daily intercession for the departed. These intercessions are retained in the editions of Wesley's works published after his death, in 1809 and 1818, but are suppressed in Jackson's edition of 1829.

CHAPTER V.

ALLEGIANCE TO THE CHURCH.

EXTRACTS from Wesley's voluminous writings have often been printed in tracts, pamphlets, and *catenæ*, showing what sort of Churchman he was. I give here, from among many, some of the more important of his sentiments and exhortations, arranged in chronological order from 1744 to 1791, proving thus that he never abandoned the orthodox position so long as he lived:²⁵

²⁵ These quotations are from the Oxford edition of Wesley's works, of 1829, containing the last corrections of the author, made in his old age. I give the *dates* and references, all of which I have carefully verified. Nearly all of them, with others, will be found in that excellent *catena* entitled "Pastoral Advice of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Edited by the Rev. James S. Pollock, M.A.," to which I acknowledge my indebtedness, and to which I refer the reader.

At the first meeting of all our preachers in conference, in June, 1744, I exhorted them to keep to the Church." (1744.)²⁶

"I dare not renounce communion with the Church of England. As a minister, I teach her doctrines; I use her offices; I conform to her rubrics; I suffer reproach for my attachment to her." (1746.)²⁷

"After dinner, one of our brethren asked if I was ready to go to a meeting. I told him, *I never go to a meeting*. He seemed as much astonished as the old Scot at Newcastle, who left us because we were mere Church of England men." (1756.)²⁸

"My brother and I closed the conference, by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to separate from the Church, and all our brethren cheerfully concurred therein." (1756.)²⁹

In 1758 he wrote a little book, entitled "Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England against all Dissenters."

"Whosoever separates from the Church, will separate from the Methodists." (1760.)³⁰

He was asked: "Can you constantly charge your people to attend the worship of our Church and not Dissenters' meetings?" He replied: "I can; this is consistent with all I have written, and all I have done for many years." (1760.)³¹

"We are in truth so far from being enemies to the Church, that we are rather bigots to it. I dare not, like Mr. Venn, leave the Parish Church, where I am, to go to an Independent meeting. I advise all over whom I

²⁶ Vol. XIII., p. 236.

²⁷ VIII., 444.

²⁸ II., 381.

²⁹ XIII., 305.

³⁰ II., 260.

³¹ XIII., 352-3.

have any influence *to keep steadily to the Church.*" (1769.)³²

While in Scotland, in 1772, he writes:

"I attended the Church of England service in the morning, and that of the Kirk [the Presbyterian] in the afternoon. Truly no man, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new! How dull and dry did the latter appear to me, who had been accustomed to the former!"³³

He had no liking for Presbyterianism. The Scottish reformers he described as "fierce, sour, and bitter of spirit." When he saw the massive ruins of the Abbey of Arbroath (which Sir Walter Scott has immortalized in *The Antiquary*), which the reformers had burned, he exclaimed: "God deliver us from reforming mobs!"

"I began preaching without delay, and warned them of the madness which was spreading among them; namely, leaving the Church. Most of them will, I believe, take my advice; I hope all that are of our Society." (1773.)³⁴

"The Methodists at Oxford were all one body, and, as it were, one soul; zealous for the religion of the Bible, and of the primitive Church, and in consequence, of the Church of England, as they believed it to come nearer the scriptural and primitive form than any other national Church upon earth. We do not, we will not, form any separate sect; but from principle remain, what we always have been, true members of the Church of England." (1777.)³⁵

³² III., 337.

³³ II., 463.

³⁴ III., 496.

³⁵ VII., 429.

"Let this be well observed. I fear when the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them." (1777.)³⁶—a warning which he often repeated.

"I believe there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England." (1784.)³⁷

"Finding a report had spread abroad [in Bristol] that I was just going to leave the Church, to satisfy those that were grieved concerning it, I openly declared in the evening that *I had now no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago.*" (1785.)³⁸

"We fixed both our morning and evening service, all over England, at such hours as not to interfere with the Church." (1786.)³⁹

"I told them [the Methodists at Deptford, that 'den of lions' who, in Wesley's opinion, 'had neither sense nor even good manners'] if you are resolved, you may have your service in church hours, *but remember, from that time you will see my face no more.* This struck deep, and from that hour I have heard no more of separating from the Church." (1787.)⁴⁰

"Unless I see more reason for it than I ever yet saw, I will not leave the Church of England, as by law established, while the breath of God is in my nostrils." (1789.)⁴¹

In the same year he preached a memorable sermon to his "lay-helpers," in which he says:

"Did we ever appoint you to administer sacraments, to exercise the priestly office? Such a design never entered into our mind, it was the farthest from our thoughts. And if any preacher had taken such a step, we should have looked upon it as a palpable breach of this rule, and consequently a recantation of our connection. I wish all of you who are vulgarly called

³⁶ VIII., 319.

³⁷ XIV., 317.

³⁸ IV., 320.

³⁹ IV., 353.

⁴⁰ IV., 375.

⁴¹ XIII., 238.

Methodists would seriously consider what has been said; and particularly you whom God hath commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no means follow from hence, that ye are commissioned to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Ye never dreamed of this for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, 'seek the priesthood also.' Ye knew, 'No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' Oh, contain yourselves within your own bounds! Be content with preaching the Gospel! Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England; and, though ye have, and will have, a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not. *Be Church of England men still.*

I dare not separate from the Church. I believe it would be a sin so to do." (1789.)⁴²

⁴² VII., 277-280. I add here a copy of an autograph letter of Wesley, which has just come to light. The original is in possession of Mr. E. B. Braithwalte, Ealing, W., England:

"DUBLIN, July 7, 1789.

"My Dear Brother.—I am not as a reed shaken in the wind. My yea is yea, and my nay is nay.

"I have been firm to the Church from my youth up; and so I shall be, till my spirit returns to God.

"If Thomas Hornby is otherwise minded, I am sorry for it.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY.

"To Mr. Hall, Junr.,
at Balsford, near Nottingham."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SO-CALLED ORDINATIONS.

WE come now to the saddest, most inconsistent, most culpable, most fatal blunder in the life of this zealous and godly man—his so-called “ordinations.”

As commonly reported, the story is that this priest consecrated another priest, Dr. Coke, as bishop, and ordained two laymen as priests, for America, and soon after some more for America and some for Scotland.

The history is miserable enough, God knows, but not quite so bad as commonly reported.

As to Dr. Coke's case, it must be remembered that Coke was a priest of the Church, in the same order as Wesley himself, and could as well have consecrated Wesley a bishop, as Wes-

ley have made Coke a bishop. *Wesley never intended to make Coke a bishop.* He repudiated the very idea of such a thing, and bitterly repented the whole transaction, to which, in his old age, he was "overpersuaded" by the crying necessities of America and the importunities of an ambitious, vacillating priest, Dr. Coke, whose allegiance to the Church sat lightly on him. It was of him that Wesley's great friend, Alexander Knox, wrote: "That Dr. Coke urged Mr. Wesley to this procedure I know with certainty from the Doctor himself; and full acquaintance with this well meaning but very inconsiderate man makes me feel that Mr. Wesley could scarcely have had a more unfortunate adviser."⁴³

The Churchmen in America were broken and scattered by the Revolution. They, including Wesley's followers, who were still in the Church, were as sheep having no shepherd. To get bishops for America seemed utterly impossible. Even Dr. White, who afterwards became the loyal and High Church Bishop of

⁴³ Letter to Southey (Ap. to last ed. of Southey's *Life of Wesley*). See also Etheridge's *Life of Coke*, p. 544 (Ed. 1860).

Pennsylvania, lost heart and actually proposed the appointment of superintending presbyters who should perform episcopal functions including ordination, as a temporary expedient, until the "episcopal succession" could be obtained.

At this juncture, Dr. Coke, an able, hard working priest-associate of Wesley, knowing Wesley's weakness as to the possibility of priests ordaining in cases of necessity, persuaded him that here was such a case.

The old man at length yielded, and performed what appears to have been the sacrilege of a mock and schismatic ordination. His brother Charles so considered it. At the same time Wesley so guarded his action as to prevent its being an ordination, even had he been a Bishop and thus capable of conferring Holy Orders. The act was deficient in matter, form, intention, canonicity, and every attribute of lawfulness and validity. It was, in fact, an inane and desperate fiasco, and, as Charles Wesley said, "realized the Nag's Head ordination."⁴ And truly so, if meant to be an ordination.

⁴ See his memorable letter to Dr. Chandler. It is printed in full in *A Meth. in Search of the Ch.*, pp. 201-205. For a brief account of the "Nag's Head Fable," see *Reasons for Being a Churchman*, p. 169 (Ed. 1905).

But will the logical reader observe the dilemma involved in Wesley's act *regarded as the ordination of Coke to the episcopate*? A Presbyter, A., ordains another Presbyter, B., to the episcopate. Now a Bishop is either *identical* with a Presbyter, or *superior*. There is no other supposition. (I.) *If identical*, A. is capable of conferring the episcopate, but B. cannot receive it. (II.) *If superior*, B. is capable of receiving the episcopate, but A. cannot confer it. Or more fully:

Presbyter A. affects to ordain Presbyter B. a Bishop. (I.) If on the supposition that a Presbyter is really a Bishop, then the act is a farce, for *on that supposition* B. was *already* a Bishop, and remains precisely what he was before. (II.) If on the supposition that a Bishop is of a distinct and higher order, then the act is equally a farce, for A., being *on that supposition* only a Presbyter and not a Bishop, cannot impart what he himself does not possess. In either case, therefore, *B. remains only what he was before*, and both A. and B. have committed sacrilege.

Regarded as an "ordination," Wesley's act was illogical, unintelligible, fruitless, sacrilegi-

ous. But regarded as the appointment of a "Superintendent" of Societies, a *Legatus a latere*, a sort of *Provincial Superior of a Religious Order*, the act is intelligible; and is reprehensible only in so far as it may seem to have *imitated*—however slightly—the outward form of an awful and sacramental act.

The writer has often appointed a beloved curate—his co-equal Presbyter—to be the "Superintendent" of a Sunday School. Mr. Wesley's appointment of Dr. Coke amounted, in reality, to nothing more than this—only the "School" was larger, and Dr. Coke took liberties with his appointment, going, as he himself acknowledges in his letter to Bishop White, further than Wesley had designed; yes, very much further—*quam longissime*. What were the actual facts?

Secretly, before daybreak, in his private bed-room, without consulting his wiser brother, who was in the same city (Bristol), the old man of eighty-two years laid his priestly hands on the equally priestly head of Dr. Coke, and "set him apart as a superintendent." He carefully avoided the word ordain and the word Bishop.

He appointed him or set him apart as superintendent. Superintendent of what or of whom? "Of many people," says he, "in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."

In the case of the two laymen whom he is said to have ordained priests that same day, he himself says he had "appointed them to act as elders," whatever that may mean. This was, in my opinion, a more grievous error than the "appointment of a Superintendent." Wesley attempts to excuse himself for acting upon his absurd hypothesis as to the powers of presbyters, by the plea of necessity, on account of the failure of all efforts to get help for America from the English Bishops, and by imagining himself—doubtless in all sincerity—"to be providentially called, at this time, to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America." He probably meant it to be a *temporary* makeshift,⁴⁵ and he protests

⁴⁵ In his letter to "Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America," he says: "At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken."

again and again that it does not and shall not involve him in any separation from the Church of England.

The day following he appointed three more for America, and soon after several for Scotland (which was still less excusable, and a more aggravated offense, as there were Bishops having canonical jurisdiction in Scotland). But he would never allow these appointees to act as ministers, or to wear the surplice, or to be addressed as reverend, when they set foot south of the Tweed, i.e., within the jurisdiction of the Church of England, to which he was even now, inconsistently, loyal. Indeed, in his desperation, he fell back on a sort of Erastianism, against which he had uniformly protested, and declared: "Whatever is done in America or Scotland is no separation from the Church of England." (!)"

When his wiser brother, Charles, from

"The charge that Wesley "ordained any for work in England proper, has never been proved, and is undoubtedly false. See *The Churchman's Life of Wesley*, by R. Denny Urlin, pp. 183-4; also Overton's *John Wesley*, p. 206. The total number of "ordinees," according to Mr. Urlin, was "about nine." None of them on returning to England were accorded any rank or prerogative above the ordinary "lay preachers," and none of them took part in "ordinations."

whom he had concealed his strange act, heard of all this, it broke his heart and aroused his righteous indignation. Most pathetic are his letters, most keen is his sarcasm.

His satire is well known :

“How easy now are bishops made,
By man’s or woman’s whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?”

And that other line :

“ ’Twas age that made the breach, not he.”

Our rash old zealot’s heart is also touched. He at first tries to defend his amazing conduct and to apologize for it; but he certainly regrets it. He writes to his brother: “If you had kept close to me, I might have done better.” He admits that he was “overpersuaded.”

Dr. Coke himself knows that his appointment is no ordination. On four different occasions, after he had gone into schism, he offers to conform again to the Church, if only he can be ordained a real Bishop.*

* In this connection one should read *A Meth. in Search of the Ch.*, Chap. XI., and especially pp. 144-5. He applied to Bp. White, Bp. Seabury, Lord Liverpool, and Mr. Wilberforce. Hammond’s *John Wesley* should be read with care, especially pp. 92-6; also p. 49.

I am indebted to the Rev. R. B. Waterman for the following note :

“No one condemns the claims of Methodist ‘bishops’

Meanwhile, Dr. Coke goes to America, where, in conjunction with a Priest of the

so unsparingly as the Methodist Dr. Tyerman in his *Life and Times of Rev. Jno. Wesley*; and I would commend that work to the clergy for its fairness and fulness in giving extracts from Wesley's writings. Tyerman attributes the Methodist episcopate to the 'ambition' of Dr. Coke. He gives a very full account of Wesley's ordination of Coke, and his subsequent letter to Asbury. Here are one or two extracts from Tyerman's work, pp. 433-438:

" 'We have no fault to find with the American Methodists being called the Methodist Episcopal Church, . . . but it was a name which Wesley never used; and to censure him for ordaining bishops is to censure him for what he never did. He ordained a *superintendent*; but he never thought to call him a BISHOP.'

"Again:

" 'With the highest respect for Dr. Coke, and for his general excellences, it is no detraction to assert that he was dangerously ambitious, and that the height of his ambition was a desire to be a Bishop. Some years after this, Coke, unknown to Wesley and Asbury, addressed a confidential letter to Dr. White, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania, which, if it meant anything, meant that Coke would like the Methodists of America to be reunited to the English Church, on condition that he himself was ordained to be their Bishop. In 1794 he secretly summoned a meeting at Lichfield of the most influential of the English preachers, and passed a resolution that the Conference should appoint an order of bishops to ordain deacons and elders, he himself, of course, expecting to be a member of the prelatical brotherhood. And, again, it is a well-known fact that within twelve months of his lamented death, he wrote to the Earl of Liverpool, stating that he was willing to return most fully into the bosom of the Established Church, on condition that his royal Highness, the Prince Regent, and the government, would appoint him their bishop in India.'

"Tyerman concludes: These are unpleasant facts, which we would rather have consigned to oblivion, had

Church, and a *Lutheran* preacher, he lays his hands three times on the head of a pious, unscholarly layman, Mr. Asbury, appointing him successively deacon, elder, superintendent. Then he and Asbury call themselves "bishops," and break with the Church; and Asbury is said to have destroyed a large invoice of Prayer Books which Wesley had sent to America.⁴⁸

Our zealot has started an avalanche which he cannot control. In vain he writes to Mr. Asbury, including Dr. Coke also in his scathing rebuke:

"How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave, a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a bishop. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full stop to this. Let Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better."⁴⁹

they not been necessary to vindicate Wesley from the huge inconsistency of ordaining a co-equal presbyter to be a Bishop. Wesley meant the ceremony to be a mere formality likely to recommend his delegate to the favor of the Methodists in America: Coke in his ambition wished, and intended it to be considered as, an ordination to a bishopric.'"

⁴⁸ See *A Meth. in Search of the Ch.*, p. 104 *et seq.* A few copies escaped, and one is preserved in the library of the General Theological Seminary, in New York.

⁴⁹ Wesley's Notes, VII., 187. The supposition that Wesley had bribed a Greek Bishop, Erasmus of Crete, to consecrate him secretly, is absurd. Greek Bishops cannot consecrate without two co-consecrators. Wesley denied the insinuation.

Hampson, Wesley's earliest biographer, writes: "Sometime before his death Mr. Wesley repented of the steps he had taken" (in the so-called ordinations); and the Rev. James Creighton, a priest in Anglican Orders, one of Wesley's most trusted clergymen, employed by him to celebrate the sacraments in London, and who was induced to unite with him in the "ordinations," has testified that Wesley repented with tears that he had ordained any of his lay-preachers, and that he expressed his sorrow for it at the conference of 1789, and occasionally afterwards until his death in 1791. In the last six weeks of his life Wesley exclaimed: "The preachers are now too powerful for me!"

We cannot forbid him to tread the *via pœnitentiæ*.

Oh, had he been content to wait but three short months, his followers in America would then have had, in the person of Samuel Seabury, a true successor of the Apostles, a Bishop after Wesley's own heart, and one, too, who would gladly (as he told Charles Wesley) have ordained all the lay-preachers in America who were fit to receive Holy Orders.

Thus the American Methodists drifted away

from the Church, to our great loss—as we freely admit—and to their own great loss, as many of my Methodist friends have acknowledged to me.

In England the Methodists remained true to the Catholic Church until after Wesley's death. Then the most of them, step by step, trampled his life-long teachings under their feet, and, ceasing to be Churchmen, ceased to be true Wesleyans.

I cannot go into the history of the unfortunate schism. Suffice it to say, it was the greatest blow the Holy Church throughout all the world has received during the last three hundred years, *and was in defiance of the convictions, the hopes, the plans, the warnings, and the commands of the founder of Methodism.*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The separation of the English Methodists from the Church was gradual, being marked by three stages:

1. Soon after Wesley's death it was proposed, in the Conference of 1792, that the lay-preachers should be allowed to administer the sacraments. It was decided to leave the decision to *God*, by casting lots. The lot was *against* the proposed sacrilege. At a subsequent Conference, 1795, a vote was taken, and by a bare majority it was decided to allow the lay-preachers to administer the Sacraments. This they proceeded to do (though a majority of Methodist families, for a generation and more, continued to resort to the Church for sacramental ministrations). *No laying-on-of-hands, no form of ordination was used.* This custom continued for forty-one years.

"No voice from Heaven hath clearly said,
'Let us depart'; then fear to roam." (*Keble.*)

II. In 1836, the Conference decreed that thereafter all their ministers should be "ordained" by the laying on of hands. Thereupon three lay-preachers *who had never received, directly or indirectly, any form of ordination whatever*, viz., Messrs. Bunting, Reece, and Newton, laid their hands on the new candidates. This is the origin of the Methodist ministry in England. *It has no connection with Wesley. He would have scorned it. It lies under his anathema.*

III. I quote the words of an accurate writer in the *Church Times*:

"Down to the Nottingham Conference of 1891, the Wesleyans had never 'assumed the name of a Church'; up to that date, all neophytes had been admitted by ticket into the 'Wesleyan Methodist Society.' But it was then decreed that when the existing stock of tickets had been used up (for the Conference had a frugal mind), the new ones should bear the stamp of 'Wesleyan Methodist Church,' and measures were taken to advertise the public of the transformation—in hundreds of instances, for example, the words, 'Wesleyan Chapel' were painted out, and the words 'Wesleyan Church' painted in, on the notice boards of the Methodist sanctuaries." They seem to have forgotten Wesley's own words, "Warn them [the Methodists] against calling our Society 'a Church,' or '*the Church.*'" (*Wesley's Works*, Vol. vi., 358, Ed. of 1810.)

As late as 1784, when Wesley sent Coke to America, he still forbade his American followers to hold services at Church hours in any place where there was a church. (See *Churchman's Life of Wesley*, p. 171.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE PEACEFUL END IN THE COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

OUR aged priest, after his sad and repented blunder, lived on some five years; still prayed, still preached, still loved. And his love for the dear old Church grew stronger and stronger as the light of the New Jerusalem streamed in upon his ripening soul. The only cloud on his horizon was the dread lest, after his decease, some of his followers—he feared perhaps “a third” of them—should leave the Church. Dear, credulous heart! He little knew; he little knew! But he left it on record that if they left the Church, they left him, and God would leave them. When his friend, Alexander Knox, asked him how he would wish his

friends to act in case the Methodists should withdraw from the Church, his answer was: "I WOULD HAVE THEM ADHERE TO THE CHURCH AND LEAVE THE METHODISTS." Fifteen months before his death, he said:

"I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. . . . I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that NONE WHO REGARD MY JUDGMENT OR ADVICE WILL EVER SEPARATE FROM IT."—(December 11, 1789).⁵¹

The calm and the peace of Paradise were now upon him. He kneels on Jordan's brink awaiting the Master's call. His last words are, "Bless the Church and King, and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—"Farewell."

The active brain, the tireless body, the loving heart of the Anglican zealot are at rest forevermore.

He was taken away from the evil to come. He did not live to see his lay-preachers usurping the priesthood, and mutilating their found-

⁵¹ Vol. XIII., 241.

er's tomb."⁵² He did not live to see inexcusable apostacy sweeping not "the third part," but nearly the whole, of his followers from the Catholic Church he loved, into the schism he abhorred. He did not live to see his one mistaken and repented act of outrage upon the poor American Church, bereaving her of millions of her children—nourished at her breast, but now lifting up their heel against their Holy Mother. He did not live to see his own works garbled,⁵³ expurgated, suppressed, mistranslated, misapplied, and himself, Josiah that he was, unjustly placed in the gallery of popular history as a son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. He did not live to see his lifelong pleading for unity within the Kingdom of God, answered by the great defection from that Kingdom, and that defection itself rent by centrifugal disintegration

⁵² Strictly speaking, I refer here to the memorial tablet which was placed in the City Road chapel, with the inscription: "The Patron and Friend of the Lay Preachers." After the lay-preachers had affected to usurp the priesthood, the original tablet was replaced with another, bearing the inscription: "The Chief Promoter and Patron of the Plan of Itinerant Preaching."

⁵³ For nearly a century past the Methodists have published only garbled or expurgated editions of Wesley's works. To know what Wesley taught, one must resort to the old editions. Even Jackson's Ed. of 1829 omits some of his valuable teaching.

into a score and a half of sects, a swarm of meteors dancing, in their oblique, eccentric, individual orbits, through the kosmos of God!"

Sleep, noble zealot of the Catholic Church! Dream, if thou canst, that thy children are still in the dear old Homestead. Or, if angel-message have made known to thee the catastrophe, yet of this be assured: thy labor was not all in vain. Thou didst rouse from her slumber the Bride of Christ in the realm of England. Her waking was slow. But oh, that thou couldst see her now!—awake beyond thine utmost vision, alive above thy fondest hope!

And those wandering children, mayhap, God, in His own time and way, will "fetch them home," that the followers of John Wesley, restored to the Church of John Wesley, may be Wesleyans once more.

⁵⁵ There are now from 25 to 30 Methodist denominations, of which 17 are in the U. S. A.

OREMUS.

O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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(n.=note.)

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